



# Flower Garden Banks



## Habitats

Coral reefs  
Algal-sponge communities  
Brine seep  
Sand flats  
Pelagic, open ocean  
Drowned reefs

## Key Species

Star and Brain coral  
Grouper  
Manta ray  
Hammerhead shark  
Loggerhead sea turtle

## Flower Garden Banks

### National Marine Sanctuary

lies one hundred miles off the coasts of Texas and Louisiana where three underwater gardens emerge from the depths of the Gulf of Mexico like oases in the desert. The Flower Garden and Stetson Banks are surface expressions of salt domes beneath the sea floor.

These premier diving destinations harbor the northernmost coral reefs in the continental United States and serve as regional reservoirs of shallow-water Caribbean reef fishes and invertebrates.

## Research Activities

A wide range of research activities are conducted in the sanctuary: monitoring reef health, cephalopod, elasmobranch and sea turtle surveys, mass coral spawning, genetics, fish censuses, and deep-water remotely operated vehicle surveys.

## Education Activities

Classroom and shipboard presentations and volunteer training workshops for teachers and researchers are important parts of the sanctuary education activities. A news bulletin, brochures, posters and videos join with a technical series to relay research and management activities to the public.



**Location**  
*Roughly 110 miles south of the Texas-Louisiana border*

**Protected Area**  
*56-square miles*

**Designation**  
*January 1992  
October 1996,  
Stetson Bank*

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*Above: A marbled grouper in the Flower Garden Banks; left to right: goldentail morays; french angelfish; coral spawning*

